



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Wildlife Division
PO Box 200701
1420 East 6th Avenue
Helena MT 59620-0701
July 10, 2009

Dear Interested Person:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) is requesting public comment on proposed 2009 Early Season Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations and Non-game Tax Check-off Projects. The proposed 2009 Early Season Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations were adopted at the July 8, 2009 FWP Commission meeting and represent no change to the 2008 regulations except for the proposed changes described below. For reference, the 2008 Early Season Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations may be found under "2008 Final Adopted Hunting Regulations" under Hunting/Regulations at the at the fwp.mt.gov website. A list of Non-game Tax Check-off Projects adopted at the July 8, 2009 FWP Commission meeting is listed below. Final adoption and endorsement of proposed 2009 Early Season Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations and Non-game Tax Check-off Projects will take place at the August 13, 2009 FWP Commission meeting.

Proposed 2009 Early Season Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations:

Proposed changes to 2008 Early Season Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations below. All other 2008 season elements proposed to remain unchanged for 2009. See 2008 regulations for reference.

- Season dates for Rocky Mountain Population of Sandhill Cranes (special drawn permits):
September 5 – September 20
- Season dates for Mid-continent Sandhill Cranes: September 26 – November 22
- Dillon/Twin Bridges/Cardwell special drawn permits: Increase permits from 50 to 75
(each permitted hunter to have a two-crane bag limit)

Non-game Tax Check-off Projects:

- **Prioritize Habitat for Conservation**

Regional wildlife biologists use GIS technology, wildlife survey information, wildlife occupancy models, and habitat assessments to evaluate the relative importance of proposed habitat conservation projects. Biologists prioritize proposed habitat projects that meet the overall direction and objectives of the Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy for habitat and species conservation.

Measurable Objective: Preliminary review of proposed land conservation projects and cursory site visit to assess wildlife species presence.

- **Inventory and Monitoring Species of Concern**

Little is known about many of Montana's Species of Concern as documented in the Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy. Inventory and monitoring of species known to be rare or declining provides important information for management decisions and conservation actions.

Measurable Objectives: Statewide species distribution and abundance information to address data gaps identified in the Conservation Strategy.

- **Loon Conservation in Northwestern Montana**

The common loon is a Species of Concern in Montana due to small population size and sensitivity during the nesting season. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks partners with a number of agencies and organizations to monitor population trends and improve nesting success through educating water-based recreationists and wildlife viewers.

Measurable Objectives: Annual participation in loon ranger program through partial support of at least three loon rangers to collect loon productivity data and provide education.

- **Post De-Listing Bald Eagle Monitoring**

The national plan to monitor bald eagles as a de-listed species calls for range wide surveys every five years for 20 years. Each survey gathers information on the status of the bald eagle using a combination of aerial surveys and nesting data. The first survey began in May 2009. Montana will need to provide state coordination, data collection assistance and data analysis assistance. Occupancy and productivity data will be gathered at a representative sample of Montana's bald eagle nests.

Measurable Objectives: Statewide occupancy and productivity estimates for a sample of Montana bald eagle nests. This data will contribute to the long-term trend estimation of statewide bald eagle productivity.

- **Post De-Listing Peregrine Falcon Monitoring**

The national plan to monitor peregrine falcons as a de-listed species calls for range wide surveys every three years for 15 years. The 2009 survey is the third in this series and is a coordinated effort to determine occupancy and productivity at all historical nest sites. More than 60 sites will be monitored in Montana.

Measurable Objectives: Statewide nest occupancy and productivity estimates for at least 60 Montana peregrine falcon nests. This data will contribute to the long-term trend estimation of statewide peregrine falcon productivity.

- **Educational Publications**

The "Birds of Montana" book is a complete guide to the over 400 avian species that inhabit Montana. The book will be a useful ornithological reference that increases awareness of conservation issues regarding birds and their habitats. Information on history, behavior and general biology will be included providing bird enthusiasts and conservationists a useful field and planning tool. The "Montana Bird Distribution" book is also an excellent companion to a field guide because it shows where birds are found in Montana. This book is also useful to government agencies, landowners, consultants, and biologists when making management decisions.

Measurable Objectives: Publication of both books within the FY2010/11 timeframe.

For further clarification, you may call the Wildlife Division office at 406-444-2612. Comments can be sent to: FWP – Wildlife Division, Attn: Public Comment, POB 200701, Helena MT 59620-0701. To submit comments electronically, this letter with the imbedded link below can be found under "Opportunity for Public Comment" on the Hunting home page at the fwp.mt.gov website.

Proposed 2009 Early Season Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=ifg4_2fYViY77HH_2fGnEFXYJw_3d_3d

The deadline for public comment to be received on proposed 2009 Early Season Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations is 5:00 PM Friday, August 7, 2009. The FWP Commission will take final action on this item at its August 13, 2009 meeting.

Non-game Tax Check-off Projects

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Di4cei9lv3gcMkldq71wug_3d_3d

The deadline for public comment to be received on Non-game Tax Check-off Projects is 5:00 PM Friday, August 7, 2009. The FWP Commission will take final action on this item at its August 13, 2009 meeting.